

**OFFICE OF THE LT. GOVERNOR  
STATE HOUSE  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2797**

**Sue Ellspermann  
LT. GOVERNOR**

**For Immediate Release**  
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**Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann Announces Fourth  
Round of Blight Elimination Program Awards**

*Applicants in seven counties awarded over \$6 million  
to address blighted homes*

Indianapolis – Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann today announced that seven Indiana applicants have received a combined award of over \$6 million to help prevent avoidable foreclosures by eliminating blighted and abandoned homes in those communities through the Hardest Hit Fund Blight Elimination Program (BEP).

Successful applicants receiving awards include:

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| • The Town of Cambridge City (Wayne County)  | \$ 54,000    |
| • The City of Columbus (Bartholomew County)  | \$ 760,000   |
| • The City of Kokomo (Howard County)         | \$ 1,330,000 |
| • The City of Marion (Grant County)          | \$ 1,022,000 |
| • The City of Richmond (Wayne County)        | \$ 1,931,000 |
| • The Town of Silver Lake (Kosciusko County) | \$ 61,000    |
| • Dearborn County                            | \$ 218,000   |
| • Warrick County                             | \$ 1,142,000 |

These local governments and their non-profit partners are the successful applicants in the fourth of six rounds of funding that will make a total of \$75 million available for blight elimination to reduce foreclosures and stabilize property values.

The Blight Elimination Program provides an opportunity for local units of government in all 92 Indiana counties to compete for funding to prevent avoidable foreclosures through the elimination of blighted, vacant and abandoned homes.

“To date over \$38 million has been allocated in the first four divisions of the Blight Elimination Program,” said Lt. Governor Ellspermann. “Whether communities have identified and received funding for just one house or hundreds of blighted properties, this program will provide an immediate and lasting impact on cities and towns throughout Indiana.”

“Neighborhoods across Indiana that have been struggling with the damaging effects caused by vacant and abandoned properties will soon see the benefit of these federal funds,” said Treasury Deputy Secretary Sarah Bloom Raskin. “We believe this program is a critical step in preventing foreclosures by reducing blight in our communities and hope these efforts help stabilize neighborhoods for years to come.”

The Blight Elimination Program funds are drawn from the \$221.7 million in Hardest Hit Funds allocated to Indiana. In February 2014, the U.S. Department of the Treasury approved the use of \$75 million of Indiana’s Hardest Hit Funds by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) for successful BEP applicants. The partnership between IHCDA and Treasury allows for funding to eliminate blighted properties and offer a variety of end uses for the newly cleared parcels, such as green space or redevelopment.

“It’s great to see that eight more municipalities across the state of Indiana have taken steps to fight blight in their communities,” said Mark Neyland, IHCDA Director of Asset Preservation, who manages Indiana’s Hardest Hit Fund Program. “Funds from the Blight Elimination Program will make a positive impact in neighborhoods across the State by allowing communities to prevent avoidable foreclosures by removing blighted houses and transforming properties through positive and productive end uses that will benefit local residents and increase surrounding property values.”

The State of Indiana has been divided into six funding divisions. Any local unit of government wishing to apply for funds to eliminate blighted homes must do so to IHCDA by their division deadline. Applicants will apply for funds from the funding division in which their county is located. The application deadlines for divisions one, two, three and four have passed. Lt. Governor Ellspermann announced awards for successful applicants in division one on May 22, 2014, division two applicants on June 26, 2014 and division three applicants on July 24, 2014. Division five awards will be announced in late September.

IHCDA estimates that approximately 4,000 blighted and/or abandoned homes in Indiana will be eliminated through the Blight Elimination Program. Interested local government officials should visit [www.877GetHope.org/blight](http://www.877GetHope.org/blight) to learn more and apply.

## **Background**

Blighted, vacant and abandoned homes are a serious issue for Hoosier homeowners, neighborhoods and communities as Indiana has the highest percentage of abandoned foreclosed homes in the country. RealtyTrac and 24/7 Wall Street have reported that roughly 30 percent of Indiana’s foreclosed homes are abandoned. Many of these properties quickly fall into a state of blight and attract undesirable or unlawful activity, thereby negatively impacting Indiana homeowners and neighborhoods by reducing property values and draining local government resources. Many Indiana communities simply lack the resources necessary to combat this problem alone.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury established the Housing Finance Agency Innovation Fund for the Hardest-Hit Markets (Hardest Hit Fund) to provide financial assistance to families in the states most impacted by the downturn of the housing market. The U.S. Department of the

Treasury designed the overall program to give each participating state the flexibility to tailor its program to the unique factors contributing to its state's foreclosure problems. Eighteen states and the District of Columbia administer Hardest Hit Fund assistance to qualified homeowners struggling to make their mortgage payments.

IHCDA's announcement that it was exploring the use of Hardest Hit Funds to eliminate blighted and abandoned properties has not detracted from the mission of helping struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure. The Blight Elimination Program is simply one more instrument in the foreclosure prevention tool kit. As of July 31, 2014, nearly 3,800 homeowners in 91 of 92 counties have received approximately \$45.8 million in Hardest Hit Fund mortgage payment assistance; and \$95.4 million has been reserved to make mortgage payments for the approved homeowners currently enrolled in the program. For more information on Indiana's Hardest Hit Fund, visit [www.877GetHope.org](http://www.877GetHope.org).

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**About The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority:** The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), chaired by Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann, creates housing opportunity, generates and preserves assets and revitalizes neighborhoods by investing financial and technical resources in the development efforts of qualified partners throughout Indiana. IHCDA believes that growing Indiana's economy starts at home. For more information, go to [www.ihcda.in.gov](http://www.ihcda.in.gov) or [www.in.gov/myihcda](http://www.in.gov/myihcda).

*The Lieutenant Governor manages the following agencies of State government: Office of Defense Development, Office of Community and Rural Affairs, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Office of Tourism Development, Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority.*

**Media Contact:**

Amber Kent, IHCDA Public Information Officer  
[akent1@ihcda.in.gov](mailto:akent1@ihcda.in.gov)  
317-232-7781